To the Rural District Council for the Union of Romney Marsh.

Gentlemen,—The year opened with the receipt of Dr. Fletcher's report, part of which I dealt with in my last annual report, and through the year you and your officers have been a good deal occupied in endeavouring to bring the sanitary condition of the district up to the requirements of that report, but considerable difficulty has arisen, in Dymchurch, especially from the opposition of the Parish Council.

A Committee of the Rural District Council met at Dymchurch, together with your Medical Officer, Inspector of Nuisances, Mr. Frank Elliott, and others, and reported to the whole Council. In consequence of this meeting and report, a large part of the village was re-surveyed by me with the Inspector of Nuisances, and reported on further to the Council. Certain nuisances were in consequence abated, and matters put into a better state generally.

But when the Rural District Council proposed carrying out the extension of the drain as suggested by Dr. Fletcher, the Parish Council made great objection, and finally the whole question was referred to the Local Government Board, and so the matter rests at present.

I would point out the considerable amount of new building that is going on between the High-street and the sea wall, and suggest that the question of a drain there should be seriously considered.

In January there was an outbreak of measles at Dymchurch of such extent as to justify, in my opinion, the closing of the schools and their disinfection and cleansing. The two latter were done under my directions. The school was closed for about three weeks, and there have been no more cases.

I have made a complete survey of the Rectory at St. Mary's, which was vacant, and made a report suggesting many necessary alterations, all of which were carried out. I watched the sanitary arrangements being made for a new house at Snave, and suggested the employment of the slop water from the house for flushing the closet and drain. I was most obligingly met by the builder and agent, and, I think, all my suggestions were carried out. During the year I have been all over the district and called the attention of your Surveyor or the owner or occupier to various insanitary conditions, and had the same put right.

In February I inspected a cottage at St. Mary's, and reported that I did not consider it fit for occupation. Later I reported the re-occupation of one of the Towers at Dymchurch which had been condemned on account of the absence of any sanitary provision. The matter was attended to.

I have paid a good many visits to Sutton Farm, at Dymchurch, as has also your Inspector, and at last a portion of the work required has been done, but a good deal remains.

I reported a house at Dymchurch as being in a filthy condition. This was cleaned by the landlord after notice.

I have inspected a part of the Parish of Brookland, and had various matters attended to, but the village itself should be treated as a whole, and I hope shortly to present a report to you with suggestions for dealing with the sanitation of the village.

A case of scarlatina occurred in the child of a visitor to Dymchurch; the child was removed to the Hospital, and the house disinfected; there were no more cases.

I have personally attended the meetings of the Council when there was any sanitary matter to be dealt with.

I have called your attention two or three times during the year to the necessity for the registration of cow-keepers, and quite recently the whole (I think) of the dairymen and cow-keepers have registered. I have not had time, however, since the registration, to inspect them, but shall do so shortly.

There has been no Surveyor under the Public Health Act appointed yet.

The general health of the district has been exceptionally good during the year, probably largely due to the equable temperature and very light rainfall.

The births numbered 56, giving a birth rate of 22.6 per 1,000 persons living.

The deaths numbered 25, equal to an annual rate of 9.7 per 1,000. Three of these deaths were from accident, and twelve were of persons over 65 years of age.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

HENRY HICK.

16th February, 1903.